

Rules:

Sheena must drink to contradict Adam must affect an accent to mock =

CARRIE. Yes, it's... green?
 MATTHEW. I'll come with you.
 EDITH (to MATTHEW). Fine, but then help Adam with the tree. I'm just going to finish up next door.
 CARRIE. Why don't I come with you instead?
 EDITH. No. Go with Matthew - you've never seen the garden before.
 CARRIE. Edith, please let me help you. I feel wretched about the... thing.
 EDITH. Well, that's very kind of you. Thank you.
 CARRIE. And to cheer us up we can sing carols while we do it.
 EDITH. Oh well, won't that be... lovely.
 CARRIE (standing, dancing around). We three Kings of Orient are. One in a taxi, one in car. One on a scooter blowing his hooter, smoking a big cigar! Oh, star of wonder...!
 EDITH and CARRIE exit to the corridor; MATTHEW exits to the garden.
 ADAM dresses in the shirt. SHEENA enters. She averts her eyes while ADAM hurries to dress.
 SHEENA/ADAM. Adam, I just wanted - / Look, Sheena, I'm -
 SHEENA. Sorry...
 ADAM. No, I'm sorry.
 SHEENA. You go.
 ADAM. No, you first.
 SHEENA. I just wanted to say, it was a good idea to stay the night. I shouldn't have resisted.
 ADAM. No, I should've asked you first. We'll leave just as soon as we've taken Emma up the hill.
 SHEENA. She just told me she doesn't want to.
 ADAM. What...?

SHEENA. She's afraid she won't make it to the top and doesn't want to disappoint herself. I couldn't change her mind. She said her 'decision was final'.
 They share a sad smile.
 ADAM. We can try and take her for a walk once we get home.
 SHEENA. So... you're coming home, then?
 ADAM. Yes, of course I'm coming home. I've missed you.
 SHEENA. I've missed you, too.
 They smile.
 ADAM. Come here...
 SHEENA approaches and adjust his shirt collar.
 SHEENA. You look good in a shirt. Even an old man's shirt.
 ADAM. I'm glad it looks good, cos it smells like Toilet Duck.
 SHEENA (smelling the shirt). It does, what does she use to clean it?
 ADAM. Knowing Mum, napalm.
 They share a smile, she tries to get away from the smell, he pulls her into a kiss.
 SHEENA. So I'll make an appointment, then. We'll get started straight away.
 ADAM. Start what?
 SHEENA. Couples' therapy.
 ADAM (disengaging). What? No, no, Shay, you know exactly how I feel about couples' therapy, that's not going to change. I thought I made myself clear about that.
 SHEENA pours herself a glass of wine.
 You selectively remember conversations, we've been over this. Please don't make me repeat myself again. Let's just try and have a good day today, okay?
 SHEENA. I think there's been a misunderstanding... (Drinking.) You're going straight back to the Travelodge unless you agree to therapy. I made myself clear about that.

START

ADAM. Look, can we please talk about this when we get home. Sheena?

SHEENA (*drinking*). No, we can talk about this now and then you can come home.

ADAM. I can't talk about this now – we're in the middle of Christmas.

SHEENA. Fine, in that case you'd better do your washing overnight because you're going straight back to the hotel tomorrow.

ADAM. What kind of woman makes her husband live in a Travelodge when his father's ill in hospital?

SHEENA. I'm sorry that your father's ill... (*Drinking*.) But that doesn't change anything. I'm not going to welcome you back with open arms just because your dad's had a minor setback.

ADAM (*affecting an accent*). Stop, please, I'm drowning in sympathy.

SHEENA (*drinking*). No, you don't get to paint me as the 'bad guy' here, you're the one using your dad's illness as a 'Get Out of Jail Free' card. D'you know, I really thought this time might be different. But here you go again making excuses.

ADAM. This time is different, I've given a lot of thought to what you said.

SHEENA. Did you read the Information Pack?

ADAM. What Information Pack?

SHEENA (*retrieving it from her handbag*). The Information Pack the therapist gave us, the Information Pack which I photocopied and put on top of the suitcase I packed for you. Did you read it?

ADAM. Yes.

SHEENA. You did?

ADAM. Yes.

SHEENA. And?

ADAM. It made a lot of things much clearer.

SHEENA. What things did it make clearer?

ADAM. Just the... mechanism... of the whole... process... I read the first couple of pages.

SHEENA. You read the first couple of pages.

ADAM. And that was enough. Look, with all due respect, it was the biggest load of pseudo-psychological nonsense I'd ever read in my life.

Scene Nine

The following rules are disclosed to the audience for the duration of the scene:

Rule 1: Matthew must sit and eat to tell a lie

Rule 2: Carrie must stand and dance around to tell a joke

Rule 3: Sheena must drink **and interrupt** to contradict

Rule 4: Adam must affect an accent to mock

Rule 5: Edith must clean to keep calm

A slash (/) marks the point where SHEENA interrupts the preceding person's speech.

ADAM (*affecting an accent, mocking the Information Pack*).

'Robbie's mother never told him she loved him and so now he's addicted to sex with strangers. Selena's sister was always getting better grades / than her so now she feels inadequate –'

SHEENA (*drinking, interrupting*). No, no, don't you dare mock me.

ADAM. I'm not mocking you, I'm mocking the pamphlet / you are wilfully misunderstanding me as usual //

FINISH